



2008 McKeown Scholars Program General Administration Instructions

Initial Qualifying Requirements: Public or private high school seniors interested in applying to the McKeown Scholars Program (MSP) *must be legal residents of the cities/towns participating in the program.* They must also actively plan to attend a fully accredited four-year college or university and be ranked within the top 20% of their respective school's graduating class *according to their school's most recently published statistics.* The program will be administered by the participating community's public high school (only).

Disposition of Completed Applications: Once qualified seniors return completed applications to the designated school official, a school administrator will review same for accuracy and certify eligibility by signing each application in the *Administrator's Certification* section. The same number appearing in the upper right corner of the application must later be used to encode a student's one-hour essay. This encoding must be done *prior* to essay evaluation by school staff.

Administration of One-Hour Essay: *On Wednesday, March 12, 2008, and not on any other date,* all students who have submitted verified applications and who wish to continue must complete a one-hour long essay at the community's public high school (only). The essay subject will be selected by Cummings Foundation, Inc. (CFI) and revealed that day. A designated official in each community should administer the essay during afternoon school hours, in a carefully controlled environment (ideally a high school computer lab).

Shortly before each school's start time on the essay date, CFI will telephone designated school administrators with the essay topic. *In the interest of fairness and integrity, administrators must ensure that the assigned topic is not communicated to any students or non-essential individuals prior to the start of the essay period.*

School officials must maintain rosters to identify names and signatures of all attending participants. They must *fax* copies of all sign-in sheets to CFI Wednesday afternoon, March 12, at 781-938-8355. At the conclusion of the one-hour period, administrators should retrieve, log, and maintain careful accountability of each completed pre-numbered essay throughout the evaluation process. Since there will be no "make-up" essay date, all competing students should plan accordingly.

Evaluation of One-Hour Essay: CFI suggests that, to the greatest extent practicable, schools recruit English Department officials to conduct anonymous evaluation of the timed essays, identifying writing specimens using only digits corresponding to the students' application form numbers. Evaluators should use a numerical grading system of 1-10 to separately grade both *subject content and clarity*, and then *usage, grammar, spelling, etc.* Each essay should be scored by a minimum of *three* evaluators, and the overall highest combined scores should then advance for final consideration. Depending upon the total McKeown Scholars awards available in a particular community, evaluators should identify up to three finalists per available award, who will then advance to personal interviews.

Conduct of Personal Interviews: All finalists identified via the essay evaluation process should be promptly scheduled for personal interviews with a final selection committee of school and/or community officials, including *at least one* upper level school administrator. The tone of the interview should be to identify the degree to which a candidate possesses attributes to substantiate his or her designation as a Most Outstanding All-Around Graduate. Qualities addressed should include, but not be limited to: **scholarship, school and community service, leadership, work ethic, writing ability, demonstrated fairness and integrity, and true concern for the welfare of others.**

At this point, the committee reviews all components (application form responses, one-hour essay, any additional supporting documentation, and the personal interview) to determine each final award winner. As the McKeown Scholars Program offers *merit* awards, financial need should *not* be a factor in selecting winners, unless serving as the sole determinant between two candidates of otherwise completely equal stature. It is CFI's intent that throughout the program's future, winners will represent a strong cross-section of meritorious young *men and women* from a variety of social, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Notification to CFI and Disbursement of Funds: Not later than Thursday, April 10, 2008, school officials should forward to CFI the original sign-in lists of all essay participants and *all essays*, along with the applications, full names, color yearbook photographs (no facsimiles or paper copies), and college selections of the McKeown Scholars. *In addition, schools must submit documentation of all award disbursements to colleges/universities for 2007 winners.* **NOTE:** Effective in 2008, CFI is authorized to send scholarship funds directly to students' respective colleges / universities, upon their request and following verification of their enrollment. CFI will provide students with explicit instructions re: this redemption process.

Presentation of Awards: In addition to an individual \$5,000 award, each McKeown Scholar will receive a handsome commendatory plaque identifying him or her as a Most Outstanding All-Around Graduate. Winners will be presented these awards by a CFI or McKeown family representative at the city/town year-end award ceremonies or graduation exercises.